

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON COMPONENTS OF LOVE AMONG MALES AND FEMALES

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Abstract : Love is a universal phenomenon defined by multiple scholars and psychologists in multiple ways. Sternberg (1998) has intellectualized love in terms of three basic components namely intimacy, passion and commitment. The intimacy component is mostly emotional or sentimental in nature and involves feelings of warmth, closeness, and connection in the love relationship. The passion component comprises the motivations that are intertwined in physical attraction and sexual consummation. The commitment component is largely rational and denotes both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to sustain that love. This paper aims to compare the components of love among males and females. For comparing the dimensions love among males and females Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale (STLS) was used. The study was conducted on a sample of 60 students with an age range of 16-25 out of which 30 are males and 30 are females. The interpretation was discussed with reference to available literature and research.

Index Terms- Three components of love

I. INTRODUCTION

Love is a universal phenomenon. Every individual has experienced some level of love in his or her life-span. So many individuals experience this emotion yet it remains a mystery. It is so complex to define that only a few psychologists have attempted to give a psychological meaning to it and categorizing its types. Researchers from an assortment of disciplines have speculated on the nature of love. Zick Rubin has described love as an emotion made up of three components namely: Caring, Attachment and Intimacy. Rubin defined caring is "a part of the scale of love because in order to love someone you need to want them to be happy and show a good amount of concern for them". Individuals think about their partners, spend time on contemplating about what their partners may be doing, hoping they are okay or may worry about their well-being. Attachment occurs in someone who wants to be with their significant other. When individuals are attached to someone they occasionally have a need to be cared for by them. When someone is attached they may always have the need to be around that person, because they are drawn emotionally and/or physically to that certain person. Attachment is a very strong bond between people. If an individual is not attached to someone they are not able to love because therefore they wouldn't be drawn to that person or have a certain bond. Rubin defined intimacy as "sharing of feelings, thoughts, desires with someone. One should believe that this is part of love because sharing sexual connections, desires, feelings emotions can mean a lot to a person. When sharing it with someone else feelings build up for each other and cause one love. Two different types of romantic love were described by Psychologist Elaine Hatfield which are compassionate love and passionate love. Hatfield characterized compassionate love as feelings of mutual understanding, trust and attachment whereas passionate love is characterized as: "A state of intense desire for union with a person, including sexual attraction, anxiety and affection. Lee defined types of love as three primary, three secondary and nine tertiary types. The three primary types are: Eros, ludus, and storge. The secondary types are: mania, pragma, and agape. C. S. Lewis (1960-1988), dedicated an entire book in explaining categories of love, he described four main varieties. First category of love defined by Lewis is affection. It is based on familiarity and repeated contact and look like the solid affection seen between parents and children. Affectionate love has a "relaxed and quiet nature" and comprises of feelings of warmth, relational luxury and contentment in being together. The second category of love depicted by Lewis is Friendship. Common interests, intuitions, or tastes, coupled with collaboration, mutual respect, and understanding, form the fundamental of this love type. Eros, or "the state of being in love" is the third category of love. Lewis defined Eros as a combination of sweetness and terror as well as a sexual component. Erotic love also is characterized as a short life span. The fourth category of love defined by Lewis is Charity, which can be illustrated as Divine Gift-love which has no expectation of compensation and desires.

THE TRIANGULAR THEORY OF LOVE

Sternberg (1998) intellectualized love in terms of three basic components that form the vertices of a triangle: intimacy, passion, and commitment as seen in figure. The intimacy component is mostly emotional or sentimental in nature and involves feelings of warmth, closeness, and connection in the love relationship. The passion component comprises of the motivations that are intertwined in physical attraction and sexual consummation. The commitment component is largely rational and denotes both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to sustain that love. According to Sternberg, the three love components of love vary with respect to a number of assets, including constancy, conscious controllability and empirical salience.

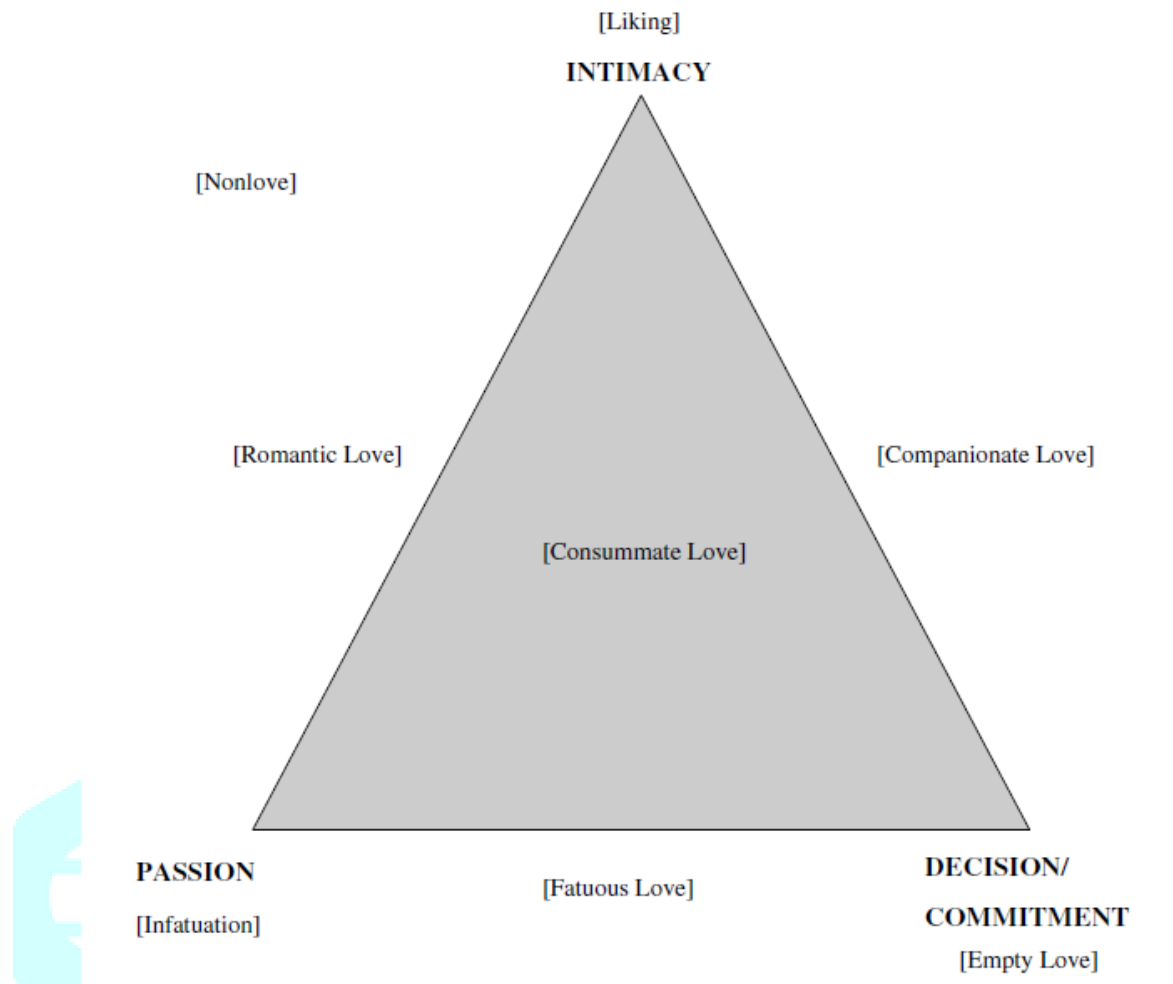


Figure Sternberg's Triangular Model of Love. The three components of love are specified at the vertices of the triangle.

For example, the components of intimacy and commitment are usually quite stable in close relationships (once they occur and become characteristic of a relationship, they tend to endure), whereas passion tends to be less stable and predictable. Also, while making commitment to relationships, people possess a control over their feelings, which indicates that they actually have a conscious control over the aggregate of passion that an individual experience for their partner. In terms of experiential salience, an individual experience feelings of closeness and warmth. Robert Sternberg's theory of love describes types of love based on three different dimensions: intimacy, passion, and commitment.

Types of Love

1. Non- love (no intimacy, passion, or decision/commitment) characterized by the casual interactions and absence of all three love components.
2. Liking (intimacy alone): Sternberg defined liking is a characteristic of true friendships, in which a person senses a bond, warmth, and a closeness with another but lack both passion and decision/ commitment.
3. Infatuated love (passion alone): is defined as a love at first sight. But without the intimacy and the commitment components of love, infatuated love may disappear soon.
4. Empty love (commitment alone): In empty love, partners are committed to each other but lack passion and intimacy.
5. Romantic love (intimacy and passion): Romantic love is a mixture of intimacy and passion but lack commitment.
6. Companionate loves (intimacy + decision/commitment): It lacks passion which indicates no sexual desires in relationships. It is often found in marriages in which the passion has gone out of the relationship, but a deep affection and commitment remain and also seen in best friendships that non sexual.
7. Fatuous love (passion + decision/commitment): These type of relationships are particularly unstable and at risk for termination.
8. Consummate love (intimacy + passion + decision/commitment) it represents an ideal relationship. It includes all components of love. It is state of love achieved by only few couples. Sternberg states that maintaining a consummate love may be even harder than achieving it.

Knowing about these components of love may help couples avoid difficulties in their relationship, it also helps couple to work on the areas that need improvement or help them to recognize when it might be time for a relationship to come to an end.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study is to compare the components of love among males and females.

2.1 Population and Sample

The sample consisted of 60 young adults those are engaged in romantic relationship out of which 30 are males and 30 are females between the age of 18 and 25 years. Their participation was voluntarily. Sampling done was purposive sampling.

2.2 Data and Sources of Data

Data for this study was collected using Brazilian version of Sternberg's triangular love scale (STLS). The scale measures three dimensions of love: intimacy, passion, commitment. It contains 45 items, out of which 15 measure intimacy, 15 measure passion and 15 items measure commitment. Each of these items is assessed with a Likert type scale, where 1 point signifies not at all, 5 moderately and 9 extremely. In this questionnaire, it was asked that the participants write the name of someone they loved. In a study conducted to establish the psychometric properties of this scale, it was found that the scale has high level of reliability (0.98).

2.3 Theoretical framework

A research conducted by Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. S. (1989) in which 5 measures of love was assessed which are- the Love Attitudes Scale, the Triangular Theory of Love Scale, the Passionate Love Scale, the Relationship Rating Form, and a measure of love and attachment (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). Data was collected from 391 unmarried college students. The study revealed predictable relations among subscales. It was found from the research that for the Triangular Theory of Love Scale and for the Relationship Rating Form stated strong interdependency among each measure's subscales. A study was done by Feingold, A. (1990) for the comparison of gender differences in effects of physical attractiveness on romantic attraction. It was done across five research paradigm. From the study evolutionary and sociocultural concepts of mate assortment preferences contend that men got greater place on physical attractiveness than women. In a research by Feeney, J. A., & Noller, P. (1990) in which it was found that attachment style was strongly related to the self-esteem as well as to the various forms of love. The research was conducted on 374 undergraduates. The research stated that in hypothetically expected ways attachment style was related to attachment history. Also, it was concluded that attachment style acts as predictor in adult romantic relationships. A study was done by Stafford, L., & Canary, D. J. (1991) to examined the way in which perceptions of interpersonal maintenance strategies used in romantic dyads vary according to relationship type (married, engaged, seriously dating and dating) and gender. Furthermore, this study inspected how perceptions of partners' maintenance behaviours differentially affect the interpersonal characteristics of control mutuality, commitment, liking and satisfaction. From the research five maintenance strategies were derived through factor analyses which are positivity, assurances, openness, sharing tasks and social networks. It was found from the study that relationship type temperately affected perceptions of partner maintenance strategies and gender inadequately affected perceptions of maintenance behaviours. Also it revealed that positivity, assurances and sharing tasks were constant and strong predictors of control mutuality, commitment, liking and satisfaction. In a research intimacy, passion and commitment in romantic relationships for adults was studied in 1992 by Acker & Davis. In which 204 adults filled questionnaires of STLS- Sternberg's triangular love scale; evaluating several constructs, including each of the three components of the theory: intimacy, passion and commitment. From the study it has been found that respondents of romantic relationships, self-reported levels were higher and the predicted decline over time in passion emerged only for females, and intimacy levels did not generally show the predicted decline for longer relationships. Conducted study showed that commitment was the most dominant and constant predictor of relationship satisfaction and especially for longer relationships. In a study of Robert Lemieux and Jerold L. hale in 1999, it was done on Factor analysis of a new set of measures for 123 women and 110 men which indicated sex differences that women scored significantly higher on intimacy and commitment than men. It also measured relational satisfaction among relationship in which components of sternberg's triangular theory of love was related. On satisfaction, each component predicted significant variance for scores as indicated by regression analysis. A cross sectional design was done by Lemieux and Jerold L hale in 2002. This study tested the assumptions in the triangular theory of love about changes in intimacy, passion and commitment over time. The research inspected differences in the three dimensions among 446 passionately involved entities who were either informally dating, solely dating, engaged, or married. Research analysis indicated the significant negative partial correlations between intimacy and length of relationship as well as between passion and length of relationship. But the correlation between commitment and relationship length was positive and significant. Scores analysis showed that the individuals who were casually dating got lowest scores on intimacy and passion and those are engaged were higher on intimacy and passion but the scores are lower for married participants. And the commitment scores increased from casually dating couples to married couples. A cross cultural research by Kim, J., & Hatfield, E. (2004) studied the relationship between love types (Hatfield and Rapson's) and subjective well-being. It was conducted on college students from an individualistic culture (USA) and a collectivist culture (korea). They completed the passionate love scale, the companionate love scale, the satisfaction with life scale, and the positive and negative affect scale. From this cross cultural study it was found that the two types: passionate and companionate love are linked with subjective well-being. It was indicated that positive and negative emotions were accounted for by passionate love rather than by companionate love. Also, the life satisfaction was strongly expected by companionate love than by passionate love. A study in 2007 examined psychometric assets of triangular love scale for three components of romantic relationships: intimacy, passion and commitment. The research was conducted on 435 adolescents aged 12-18 years, and results indicated that dimensions of intimacy, passion, and commitment were all positively related with relationship satisfaction and extent for convergent validity. For divergent validity, it was found that adolescent's insights of the main (dis)advantages of being tangled in romantic relationships showed a precise pattern of relations with intimacy, passion, and commitment. This research seems appropriate for use with adolescents. A research by Madey, S. F., & Rodgers, L. (2009) investigated the effect of attachment and intimacy, passion and commitment on relationship satisfaction. It was conducted on 55 university undergraduates who were engaged in romantic relationships. Participants are asked to filled the relationship scales questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) and Sternberg's triangular theory of love scale (Sternberg, 1988). Hierarchical regression studies revealed that the association between privileged attachment and relationship satisfaction is arbitrated by commitment and intimacy and the secure attachment predicts intimacy and

commitment, which in turn expect superior relationship satisfaction. A study was done by Graham, J. M. (2011) which identified the higher-order factors underlying the most common measures of love in use today through meta-analytic factor analysis. Data was provided by 19,387. From the research, factors suggested general love, romantic obsession, and practical friendship emerged. Also, study stated that Love was positively and obsession was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and length. The results corroborate recent conceptualizations of love and point toward the need for measurement approaches other than global self-report in the field of love research.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

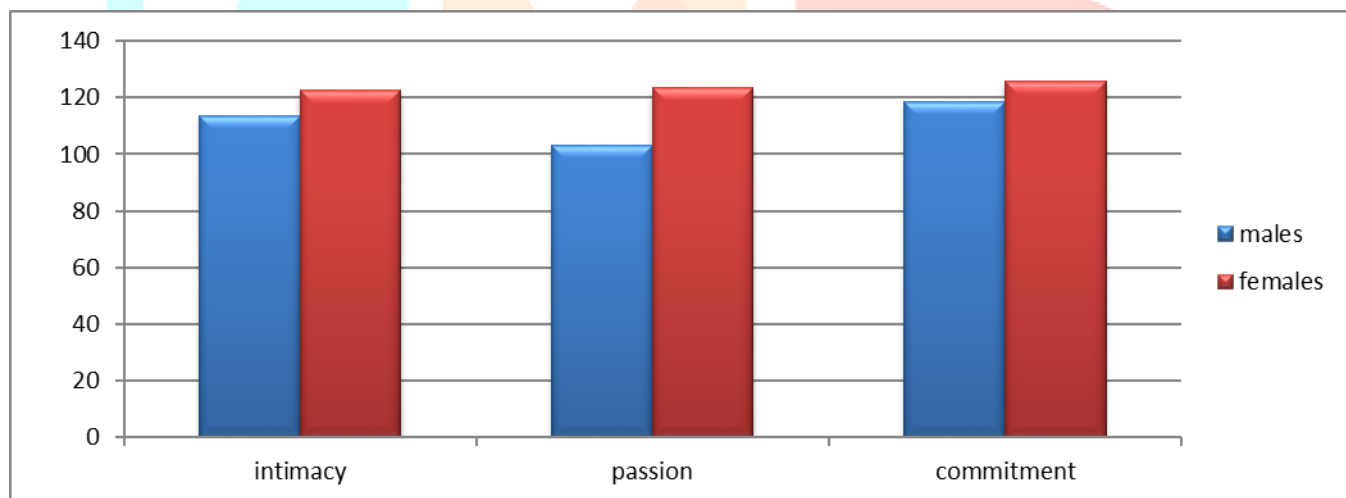
The obtained mean scores were interpreted by representing them in the form of table and graph

Table 3.1: shows the comparison of mean scores of dimension of love among males and females.

DIMENSIONS OF LOVE	MALES (mean scores)	FEMALES (mean scores)
INTIMACY	113.53	122.8
PASSION	103.13	123.5
COMMITMENT	118.36	125.63

Table 3.1 depicts the difference between males and females of dimensions of love. For each dimension, females scored higher than males. But according to the norms, males are average on intimacy component, somewhat above average on passion component and commitment component and females are average on intimacy component, significantly above average on passion component and somewhat above average on commitment component.

Graph 3.2: Double Column Graph to show difference of dimensions of love: intimacy, passion and commitment in male and female



Graph 4.2 depicts the difference of dimensions of love among males and females. From the graph it can be inferred that females scored higher on all the dimensions of love as compared to male

3.2 Discussion

The aim of this study was to compare the dimensions of love among male and female. Love is a mixture of feelings. Sternberg (1998) intellectualized love in terms of three basic components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The intimacy component involves feelings of closeness, warmth and attachment in love relationship and it is mostly emotional or sentimental in nature. The passion component is defined as a strong sexual or romantic feeling for someone. The commitment component is largely rational and denotes both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to sustain that love. Many researches have been done in the field of love and many factors have been found which are responsible for a long term relationship. Love is a feeling which everyone feels at least once in lifetime. Male and female both are willing to feel this feeling, but it depends whether male or female are more eager to stay on a relationship with their partner. Some studies showed that females scored higher on passion while some studies showed that male scored higher on commitment. Among adolescents, it becomes difficult to state that whether male are responsible for a long term relationships or females are responsible.

The results indicated that females scored higher than males on all the dimensions of love (Sternberg, 1988). In a study Robert Lemieux and Jerold L. hale in 1999 also found that females scored higher specifically on intimacy and commitment by using Sternberg's triangular love scale. As according to this study Madey, S. F., & Rodgers, L. (2009) which says that the relation between attachment and relationship satisfaction is mediated by commitment and intimacy, it also states that secure attachment leads intimacy and commitment, which results superior relationship satisfaction, so it can be predicted that in my study, the reason for scoring high for females is that they have a secure attachment towards their relationship. In another study by Feingold,

A. (1990) found that men have strong physical attractiveness with their partner, but in my study males scored lower in all the dimensions of love, so, it can be easily concluded that males have weak physical attractiveness towards their partner.

The findings of the study demonstrate that females are more sentimental and emotional than males. They have feelings of warmth and closeness. Also they are more sexually active and romantic than males. They are committed to their relationship with full loyalty which helps to sustain their love. For a long term relationship, it is important to maintain consummate love which is a complete form of love which apparently few achieve. It represents ideal relationship. For the consummate love, both male and female should have feelings of closeness and warmth, romantic to each other and completely committed to each other. Only then, they can achieve consummate love.

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